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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

Hartley Wintney Rural District

for the Year 1925.

ROTHERWICK,

March, 1926.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my report for the year 1925, this being my Sixth Annual Report as your Medical Officer.

As directed by the Ministry of Health, this is to be a Survey Report, and contains rather more detail than those for the last four years.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Area (acres)	.. .. .	53,473
Population (Census 1921)	.. .. .	20,290
„ (estimated 1925)	.. .. .	21,176
Number of inhabited houses (1921)	.. .. .	4,469
„ families or separate occupiers (1921)	.. .. .	4,621
Rateable Value	.. .. .	£141,958
Sum represented by a penny rate	.. .. .	£530

The District includes 18 Parishes, and is mainly agricultural and residential: the War Department occupy a considerable area in the south eastern part.

The subsoil is, broadly speaking, chalk in the southern half, and, in the northern half, Bagshot sands, Bracklesham beds, Reading beds, and London clay. The chalk land is entirely agricultural, the other has large commons and heath lands here and there. The highest point of the district is at Swaine's Hill, South Warnborough, near the Alton district boundary, 726 feet above sea level: the lowest is a point on Bramshill Common, near the Blackwater river, 156 feet. The area is well watered and wooded, and is an attractive residential neighbourhood.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Total	Male	Female	
Births { Legitimate	338	175	163	} Birth Rate 17·0
„ { Illegitimate	23	10	13	
Deaths	233	119	114	Death Rate 9·3

Deaths of Infants under one year 16.

Of all the cases of death, Heart and Arterial Diseases were the most numerous, 78. Cancer deaths were 32. There was one death from Influenza.

GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

There are Cottage Hospitals at Odiham, Yateley, and Fleet, and County Hospitals at Winchester and Reading.

Infectious Disease cases are treated in the Isolation Hospital of the Aldershot Borough Council.

The County Council are the Authority responsible for the treatment of cases of Smallpox, and have Hospitals at Basingstoke and Aldershot.

The County Council also provide Tuberculosis Dispensaries and V.D. Clinics at Aldershot and Basingstoke.

Maternity and Infant Welfare Centres, staffed by the County Council, are in operation at Cove, Hawley, Hartley Wintney, and Odiham: there is also one at Crondall under voluntary organisation.

There are eleven Nurse-midwives practising in the district.

The Council employ a whole-time Sanitary Inspector, who holds the certificates of the Royal Sanitary Institute for meat and other foods, nuisance inspection, and sanitary science.

The Council have the use of a motor ambulance for the transport of infectious cases: for non-infectious and accident cases the British Red Cross Society maintain a motor ambulance at Fleet.

The County Council Laboratory provides all the requisite facilities for bacteriological and other work.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER.

The Frimley and Farnborough District Water Company have a monopoly for the public supply of water all over the district, except the parish of Hartley Wintney. The supply is constant, and the water is an exceedingly pure one, but it has the disadvantage of being hard, and complaints of this are frequent. The Company are at present enlarging mains and increasing the softening plant. The water is obtained from wells sunk in the chalk at Crondall and Odiham.

In the case of houses situated more than a few yards from Company's main, very great difficulty is encountered in getting them supplied, on account of the large guarantees demanded by Company, whose interests in the matter are, of course, entirely financial.

The Hartley Wintney Parish supply is a collected water from Warren Heath: the supply is constant, and the water is soft and peaty. The sand filters are inadequate for the quantity of water requiring to be passed through them. The pressure in the mains is also considered insufficient and a scheme is under consideration whereby the pressure is to be increased by means of a tower, certain mains are to be replaced by larger ones, and the gravity filters replaced by mechanical filters.

The gathering ground has been fenced where it adjoins the high road, but there is a certain amount of risk of contamination by people who go there for wood or other reasons, and at the present time there is a considerable number of men employed on the ground digging gravel for the County Council. Enough has been said to show that this is not altogether satisfactory as a public supply, and a close watch is required to be kept on it: it will be a good thing when the projected improvements are effected.

The great majority of the wells in the district, even in cases where they tap a good supply, are not entirely satisfactory because they are inefficiently constructed, not being properly protected from surface pollution.

RIVERS AND STREAMS.

The rivers in the district are small tributaries of the Thames, which they do not reach under 12 miles: the Conservators of the Thames exercise control over them. The Blackwater, the Whitewater, and the Hart, are the principal streams.

The Blackwater takes sewage effluents from several places outside this district: it is a sluggish and shallow stream, and too small to deal satisfactorily with the large doses that are applied to it.

The Hart takes the effluent from the Hartley Wintney sewage works: the Whitewater receives the intermittent effluent from the Odiham disposal area.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The village of Hartley Wintney is sewered: the disposal works produce a satisfactory effluent.

Odiham village has a curious and inefficient system of sewers: in consequence of frequent complaints of nuisance the Council ordered a special report to be made on these sewers and sewage disposal, and I presented this in August, 1923. The main conclusions were.—

1. The sewers were constructed for the most part in very remote times, and were not intended to carry sewage but only surface water.
2. They have been subjected to many alterations and repairs, the result being a patchwork which encourages blockage and nuisance.
3. Water mains run close to the sewers, and if the pressure in these mains is intermitted for repairs or other reason, insuction of sewage from a leaky sewer is not unlikely.
4. The heavy traffic of to-day is too much for the old brick culverts in the High Street and elsewhere, and there is risk of serious accidents.
5. The effluent from the irrigation treatment appears to be satisfactory, and there is space to enlarge the disposal system if necessary.

A scheme of new sewers was drawn up, under which the present combined sewage and storm water system was continued, the County Council, as Highway Authority, being partly responsible for the cost, but this scheme did not meet with the approval of the Ministry, who considered that a scheme to deal with the sewage only, at a less cost to this Council, would be better.

At the present moment no further action has been taken by this Council.

Sewers are badly needed at Cove, and also at Blackwater.

At Cove about 300 houses on Government land are connected up to the Farnborough sewerage system.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Through the greater part of the district the larger houses are provided with water-closets, the smaller houses and cottages with pail closets, a few with earth closets, and some with pit privies.

The policy has been to reduce the number of cesspits, by requiring pails to be substituted.

SCAVENGING.

A scavenging scheme is in operation at Odiham, but is not entirely satisfactory on account of difficulties with the contractors. The scheme includes cesspools, pail closets, and house refuse.

The dumps of house refuse on the common are most unsightly.

House refuse is scavenged at Hartley Wintney, and at Blackwater pail closets emptied and house refuse collected.

At Cove cesspools are emptied and pails and house refuse collected: trouble is created by non-water-tight cesspools which fill up quickly in rainy weather.

SCHOOLS.

The sanitary conditions of these have been improved during the last few years: the Council supply disinfectant for the use of Head Teachers in the schools.

The fact that I am an Assistant to the School Medical Officer of the County is of great help in dealing promptly with outbreaks of Infectious Diseases and prevents overlapping.

HOUSING.

In the parishes of Bramshill, Crondall, Greywell, Hartley Wintney, Heckfield, Mattingley, South Warnborough, and Winchfield, the population as shewn by the Census of 1921 has declined since 1911, and in these mainly agricultural parishes the difficulty is chiefly that of poor housing, many of the old cottages having drifted into a serious state of disrepair, being in fact in such a condition as to be beyond repair except by almost complete reconstruction.

The regular expenditure, in the past, of small sums on keeping these houses in repair, would have prevented them from reaching the condition in which they are to-day.

At the present day it is not an economic proposition to put them in repair, except where a block of two or more can be converted into a "weekend cottage" and disposed of at a high figure, a process which obviously only increases the housing difficulties of the district. In this connection it is interesting to note that your late Medical Officer, in his report for the year 1913, wrote that "it would surprise many people to see the vast change that can be brought about in the old and apparently useless cottages by an owner who does his best to improve them : the expense need not be great if improvements are done gradually and continuously maintained." Also in the same report he said "another point worthy of note is the immense difference in the appearance of similar houses whether occupied by clean tenants or dirty and careless ones."

Many of the old unfit cottages in the agricultural parishes have large well-worked gardens, which are a great advantage and compensate to some extent for defects in the house.

As regards the remedying of defects, most of the results obtained have followed upon "informal action" on the part of the Sanitary Inspector: some owners, even in these difficult times, do their best to meet reasonable requests.

Where formal action is required, it is found that the most effective power the Council possesses is the making of a Closing Order. In some cases it is possible to treat certain defects as nuisances under the P.H. Acts, but I am reluctant to advise the Council to exercise their power under the Housing Acts of executing work in default of owners, on account of the difficulty of determining exactly how much requires to be done, and the uncertainty of recovering the cost from the owner.

The new houses erected under the By-laws vary within wide limits: the larger ones, (6 rooms or more) have been up to a fair general standard: the efficient independent drainage of a country house is a difficult problem in some instances.

The standard of many of the smaller dwellings has been poor. The materials and workmanship have been unsatisfactory, although they comply with the By-laws, and it appears likely that they will quickly fail and come to be a source of concern to the Sanitary department.

I should like to see the By-laws thoroughly revised, those sections omitted which are scarcely applicable to a rural district, and others substituted in order to command reasonably satisfactory and lasting dwellings.

The By-laws relating to Tents, Vans, Sheds, etc., do not effect much, and are mainly useful as a mild threat to the occupants of such dwellings: the gipsy class are almost beyond control of the Sanitary department, and the best way of dealing with them seems to be to worry them, if necessity arises, until they strike camp and move out of the district.

HOUSING STATISTICS FOR YEAR 1925.

Number of new houses erected :—

(a) Total	76
(b) With State assistance under Housing Acts—	
(1) by the Local Authority	nil
(2) by other bodies or persons	27

Unfit dwelling houses :—

Number inspected under P.H. or Housing Acts ..	1051
Number inspected and recorded under Housing Regulations, 1910	340
Number found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for habitation	148
Number (exclusive of those under preceding heading) found not to be in all respects fit for habitation	164
Number of houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by L.A. or other officers ..	121

Action under Statutory Powers :—

Under Housing Act, 1925, sect. 3	nil
Under Public Health Act	nil

Under Housing Act, 1925, sect. 11, 14 & 15—

Number of representations made with a view to the making of Closing Orders	41
Number of Closing Orders made	16
Number of Closing Orders determined, the houses having been rendered fit	10

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

MILK.

Inspection of dairies and cowsheds has been carried out systematically, and samples have been examined for dirt by means of the Gerber dirt tester, which enables a rough and ready estimation of the amount of dirt in a sample.

The conditions in many farms are not as good as they ought to be, and many milk producers do not maintain as high a standard in their methods as is necessary to ensure clean milk.

On the whole I believe improvement is slowly taking place : the retailers are more careful than they used to be, and the introduction of Graded milk has had a valuable educative effect on consumers.

In November I arranged for a party of farmers from this district to visit the National Institute of Research in Dairying, at Shinfield, where we were shown much that was interesting and instructive.

As I stated in my report for 1922, it is proved beyond any doubt that methods are more important than equipment or buildings, and clean milk can be produced, even in spite of big handicaps in the shape of unsatisfactory buildings or kit, by trained and conscientious milkers and dairymen.

MEAT.

The P.H. (Meat) Regulations have been enforced as far as possible, but in a district of this type it is an impossibility to carry out anything like complete inspection.

The butchers have, on the whole, complied with the regulations as regards giving notice of slaughter, but it not infrequently happens that their notices are delayed in the post and arrive too late to be any use. Again, most of the slaughtering is done on the same days throughout the district and the Inspector cannot be in more than one place at one time.

In the case of the established businesses there is less trouble than in that of the casual pig-killer, for example, who is not accustomed to be very punctual, with the result that often the Inspector arrives within three hours of the time of slaughter only to be informed that the butcher has not yet appeared.

I think that when the regulations have been the subject of a prosecution by the Council matters will probably greatly improve.

There are 15 slaughterhouses registered in the district: there has been no increase since 1920, and no licences have been issued under the Slaughterhouses Order (1924).

INFECTIOUS DISEASES SINCE 1920.

In the five years under review the district has been on the whole, fortunate in the matter of infectious disease: there have been one or two small epidemics of Scarlet Fever, which has been, with a few exceptions, of a mild type. In 1924 and the early part of 1925 the epidemic of Diphtheria at the district school was a serious occurrence: as I described in my report last year, the adoption of the Schick test and the carrying out of immunization proved to be a measure of undoubted value.

The prompt use of Diphtheria antitoxin, of which the Council keep a stock, is the best means we have for dealing with the individual case, but unfortunately too many cases still do not seek medical advice sufficiently early: I think this possibly explains why the first case is often the worst, the condition being thought to be an "ordinary sore throat," and not regarded as serious until the patient is gravely ill.

The steam disinfectant at the Union is used for disinfection of clothes and bedding, and the portable disinfectant is now seldom used, though it is available in reserve and has been of the greatest value: before the Council purchased this portable disinfectant material had to be transported to Aldershot for disinfection.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

				Notified.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Smallpox	..	..	..	Nil		
Scarlet Fever	..	..	..	12	8	0
Diphtheria	..	..	..	26	25	1
Typhoid	..	..	..	1	1	0
Erysipelas	..	..	..	1	0	0
Ophthalmia Neonatorum,	2 cases, treated at home, vision not impaired.					

TUBERCULOSIS.

					Pulmonary.		Non-pulmonary.	
					M.	F.	M.	F.
1 to 15	..	..	..	..	1	2	4	0
15 to 25	..	..	..	..	0	5	1	0
25 to 35	..	..	..	..	1	2	0	0
35 to 45	..	..	..	..	0	1	0	1
45 to 55	..	..	..	..	1	0	1	0
Over 55	..	..	..	..	0	1	0	0
					3	11	6	1
Total	..	..	..	..	3	11	6	1
Deaths (all ages)	..	..	..	..	11	5	5	0

In conclusion I desire to record my appreciation of the work of the Sanitary Inspector: early in 1925 the Council relieved him of his duties in connection with the supervision of new buildings, both under the by-laws and for subsidy purposes, being largely influenced to this course by the coming into force of the meat regulations. In spite of this relief in one direction his work has not diminished, having increased in other directions, and his time is fully occupied: his varied duties are discharged in a most efficient manner: I am not afraid to admit that he has taught me a good deal.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

MARK AVENT,

Medical Officer of Health.

REPORT OF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1925.

Houses and premises inspected	..	..	..	160
" " " revisited	..	..	..	567
Number of intimations of defects issued	..	..	..	numerous

Matters dealt with.

DRAINS—

Constructed	..	..	..	..	..	12
Repaired ..	..	..	..	..	..	8
Ventilated	..	..	..	..	..	10
Cleansed ..	..	..	..	..	..	119
Disconnecting traps fixed	..	..	..	..	..	1
Defective drains abolished	..	..	..	..	..	11
Gulley traps fixed	..	..	..	..	..	6
Defective traps removed	..	..	..	..	..	16
Manholes built ..	..	..	..	..	..	5
" repaired	..	..	..	..	..	1
" cleansed	..	..	..	..	..	51
Fresh air inlets fixed	..	..	..	..	..	3
Tests carried out	..	..	..	..	..	5

WATER CLOSETS—

Constructed	..	..	..	..	..	8
Abolished	..	..	..	..	..	9
W.C. pans cleansed	..	..	..	..	..	97
Flushing apparatus fixed—water supply laid on..	..	..	..	..	..	12
New W.C. pans fitted	..	..	..	..	..	6
Soil pipes fitted..	..	..	..	..	..	10
" " ventilated	..	..	..	..	..	15

PAIL CLOSETS—

Constructed	5
Abolished	0
Repaired	4
Cleansed	18

EARTH CLOSETS—

Constructed	0
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CESSPIT CLOSETS—

Cleansed	47
Abolished	5

CESSPOOLS—

Constructed	8
Cleaned out	45
Abolished	..	..	..	..	..	5
Sub-irrigation system laid down	..	..	..	..	..	9

ASH PITS—

Cleansed ..	..	..	..	..	..	17
Abolished—replaced by metal covered moveable receptacles	..	..	..	..	..	9

MISCELLANEOUS—

Overcrowding abated	1
<i>This is very difficult on account of the shortage of suitably rented houses.</i>	
Inspections made under scavenging schemes ..	274
Offensive accumulations removed	78
Unsatisfactory keeping of animals discontinued..	6
Foul premises cleansed	27

SCHOOLS—

Disinfected after epidemics	4
Defects remedied	
Supplied with Lysol as requested	
Special visits made	19

TENTS AND VANS—

Inspections made	107
Camps removed at suggestion of bye-laws ..	9
<i>The bye-laws relating to Tents, Vans, Sheds and similar structures are little observed.</i>	

WATER SUPPLY—

Provided	2
Reinstated	19
Wells sunk	9
„ cleaned out	6
Samples taken for analysis—Public Supplies ..	16
„ „ „ „ Wells	30
Samples approved	12
„ found polluted	18
Inspections made in relation to Water Supply ..	159

SLAUGHTERHOUSES—

Number of slaughterhouses registered	15
Inspections made at time of keeping	169
Inspections made of carcasses slaughtered other than those made at registered premises ..	169
Inspections made at other places where such food is prepared or stored or sold	81

BAKEHOUSES—

Number known.. .. .	29
Number of inspections made.. .. .	46
„ found unsatisfactory	9
„ limewashed	5
„ re-built	1
„ of other nuisances abated	3

OTHER FOOD—

Premises inspected and re-visited	61
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DAIRIES, COWSHEDS, MILKSHOPS—

Number on register—wholesale	147
„ „ „ retail	69
„ „ registered, 1925	13
Inspections made to Cowsheds	..	..	..	305
Number found not registered	..	..	..	9
„ „ „ clean	..	..	..	61
„ „ „ cleansed later	..	..	..	51
„ „ „ improved, repaved and drained	..	..	..	5
Samples of milk examined for dirt	..	..	..	25
„ „ „ water supplies found unwholesome	..	..	..	3
Inspections of Dairies made	..	..	..	47
„ „ „ Milkshops made	..	..	..	24
Number of Dairies and Milkshops cleaned	..	..	..	11
„ „ „ re-built	..	..	..	2
„ „ „ Nuisances abated	..	..	..	13

INFECTIOUS DISEASE—

Premises disinfected	..	..	..	57
Bedding disinfected by steam (lots)	..	..	..	34
„ „ „ „ destruction	..	..	..	2
Visits made to premises where infectious cases were notified	..	..	..	148

The Sanitary Inspector accompanies cases that go to the Isolation Hospital.

Two shelters were provided and erected for suitable Tuberculosis cases, the worn-out shelters were removed.

Lysol is supplied to schools and houses where infectious disease occurs.

(Signed) STANLEY BUTLER,

Sanitary Inspector.

